

# California Travel & Tourism Commission

## Meeting Minutes

**February 25<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Present:** Commissioners present were: Claire Bilby and Jon Handlery. CTTC Staff Caroline Beteta, Troy Cantrell, Lynn Carpenter, Jennifer Jasper, Jason Pacheco, Leona Reed, Percy Stevens, and Glenda Taylor. CTTC Int'l Offices - Australia: Jo Palmer. Germany: Martin Walter, Japan: Michael Merner. UK: Guy Chambers & Andy Price. Others present: Dave Mering, Lori Bartle, Tammy Haughey

**Next meeting:** February 2008

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### **I. Announcements**

Executive Director Beteta reported that the aspiration for the next two days will be to outline what our objectives are, and our goals. She explained that this is the first time the budget has been restructured and stated that in the coming year staff will go back to revising the mission, vision, functional plans to the strategies, and objectives.

She stated that this is the first time staff has been able to set a budget for the next seven years. She stated that this year will be to build an infrastructure to support our offices in a meaningful way (CTTC).

Susan Wilcox, Deputy Director of Operations for CTTC, announced that the Rural Tourism Manager position has been filled by Janelle Norton in March, 2007.

Caroline recognized Lynn Carpenter, Deputy Director of Marketing for CTTC, for her superior workmanship on these marketing objective projects.

### **II. Discussion**

Executive Director Beteta reported that our board is partially industry elected and partially governor appointed. She reported that checks from the Rental Car Agencies have been deposited and we are on target. She stated that approximately 5500 companies pay an assessment to the CTTC and the Rental Cars will account for \$40 of the \$50 million dollar budget. California is the number one travel destination in the US. We are projecting \$91 billion in direct travel spending for California's economy.

Caroline also reported that we are the only organization to promote the "entire" state of CA. Our job is to reach out from the bottom, our "base" of awareness, i.e. the USA. CA ranks number six as of 2005/2006 Projected State Tourism Office Budgets, with \$25 million. CA Ranks number one in the country as the leanest operating budget

Caroline explained how critical the guiding principals are to the industry i.e., evaluating programs, leverage cooperative programs, promote icons as well as lesser known entities, "do what the industry can't do for itself". She stated that advertising is the most important platform for serving up the brand. We need to increase non-resident and resident leisure travel visits.

Caroline led into California's perceived identity. "Diversity" doesn't work anymore.

"California Attitude", "Unique Culture", "Desirable Eclectic Lifestyle" are part of California's core identity and what we should be aiming to promote. The message is "people want to be an honorary Californian".

The CTTC advertising exposure going into this year is high, National Cable/Network TV, Spot TV Markets (Oscars) Seattle, Portland, SLC, & Denver (Feb 25–Jun 24), debuting at 2007 Academy Awards. In key spot markets our commercial will appear in pre-show, during, and post show coverage.

Caroline reported that we are getting great feedback for our Snow Campaigns web site. We are shoeing dramatic growth of market coverage going into this year and our call to action: Visitcalifornia.com, website launched December 2006. Also, TIA was awarded \$2 million dollars to produce individual websites for the markets in the USA.

MSi (German Office) representative, Martin Walter reported on that many other countries don't use the dot com web site's and this could be a potential problem. Lynn Carpenter indicated that funding has been allocated for purchasing additional domains for this reason.

Lynn Carpenter also noted the following items will be discussed as the meeting continues over the next two days:

1. Importance of publications in each of the countries
2. Measurement of what we place on advertising in different countries.
3. Website will go into detail as well as Co-Op

Break made at 1:35, resumed at 1:45

#### ***Advertising Review- Mering/Carson Domestic Advertising and Brand Research***

Lori Bartle of Mering/Carson reported on the research group findings. Interviews included out-of-state, in-state, and international travelers. Research showed that California diversity didn't elicit an emotional response from the consumer and that the vacation experience is, first & foremost, an emotional investment.

She reported that Mering/Carson is working on tweaking images to the individual markets. An image that works in the United Kingdom will not necessarily work in Germany and all images should be appealing to all the markets.

Lori reported that the Lifestyle piece of California is more relevant now than 10 years ago. Food & Wine came out loud & clear in the research with a strong significance in wine activities. It was noted that wine could be in danger in the next few years, with other states jumping on the "Wine Wagon." Mering/Carson also noted that from a brand standpoint, that CTTC's communication has a very powerful platform as to why our wine is better than other states.

Jo Palmer of Gate 7, reported to the group that California has a bad international perception with regards to its food. Everything is perceived as junk food/fast food in California from Australians.

Group watched video interviews, research provided by Mering/Carson, revealing International views on their time in California. Some of the things mentioned repeatedly were the weather, the relaxed life style, shopping, healthy, easy life style, the nature and the environment (the beaches).

### ***How to Work with the CTTC***

Lynn opened with the background of what we've done so far and listed Primary Markets (places CTTC has representation), Secondary Markets (France, S. Korea, Brazil), and Emerging Markets (China & India).

International Key Contacts:

Travel Trade: Glenda Taylor, Percy Stevens, Jason Pacheco

Media: Jennifer Jasper, Leona Reed, Amanda Moreland

Marketing: Lynn Carpenter, Glenda Taylor, Heather Hudson

Lynn stated would like to gather marketing information from each of the international offices. In May CTTC will be finalizing the plan down to a tactical level and will need each office to have their final presentations ready. By June CTTC would like completed contracts in place with the International offices as well as a standardized process for handling pitches to media etc.

Common materials and templates are needed for communication between CTTC and International Offices as well as outgoing documents, materials, presentations that the International offices may be doing on behalf/when representing the CTTC and California. Tools the international offices will need: Web Infrastructure, Photo Library, Sample Itineraries, Newsletters, Publications, Press Kits, Brand Guidelines, Research, Maps, Detail Maps of the Regions on the backside of the Maps, & Process Guidelines, i.e. FAMS. Questions posed by the group and need to be answered by CTTC where: How often should reports be handed in? What format should the reports be in? Status reports, samples, travel trade brochures- what's the best way to get this to CTTC? CTTC staff agreed that an internal meeting was needed to discuss processes and guide lines (i.e. FAMS & Signoffs on creative/project briefs) and that needed materials/tools will be posted on a web portal that all International offices will be able to access (upload & download).

Lynn went over Key Initiatives by country stating there will be website/promo pages/online resources for some countries. Publications specific to region, brand advertising in Canada, UK & Mexico, and dollars in targeted advertising in Germany, Japan, and Mexico was also discussed.

CTTC Toolkit will provide a toolkit to International Offices, which will include items and guidelines/processes: Developed County Plans, Maintain & Build Media Relationships, Travel Agent Training Programs, Reporting, Website Translation, In Country Research Facilitation, Surface Co-op, Media Opportunities, Present Opportunistic Programs, SKYPE Accounts for all offices for ongoing Communication

Lead time for all trade & PR projects was discussed at length. It was concluded that CTTC staff would need to have an internal meeting to establish guidelines and back up procedures for signing off on Trade & PR projects. It would also be discussed internally how CTTC needs the information served to them to ensure a speedy response. Five business days is still the standing request from CTTC for turn around on all project proposals.

Discussed precise resources & staffing requirements to support offices. CTTC again will discuss internally how to build out resources and infrastructure. On-going communication should take place between CTTC and all International offices every 2<sup>nd</sup> moth, (perhaps once a month until plan is set?). This will be a "Global Status Call" and major milestones and updates on infrastructure will be discussed. Travel plans and out-of-office dates should be sent every couple of months between CTTC and each International office so people can plan for absences.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Clair Bilby opened the meeting at 9:10 am

Lynn opened with a brief overview of "The Plan" but first debriefed the group on what was the goal ten years ago and how we've accomplished those goals thus far.

The mission and vision of the CTTC: To act as a catalyst to increased travel & tourism spending and to do what the industry can not do for itself. Goals for the CTTC would include: Leverage coop programs & focus on int'l & new market development, Evaluate program ROI, Support assessed businesses, Focus on out of state & int'l audience, Establish a technology link for all programs to develop a platform.

Marketing strategies that were presented by Lynn and outlined in the plan were:

- Protect & maintain volume in domestic & primary market
- Reach visitors within key national markets through awareness & brand programs
- Expand marketing & seasonal coverage to drive year round visitation
- Deepen efforts in primary international markets
- Create technology platform to tap into existing CA brand character and provide additional avenues for consumer reach

International Offices presented Country Presentations, draft versions which will be finalized by May.

The Plan and Country Presentations can be viewed using this link <http://visitcalifornia.com/page.php?id=884> or [www.visitcalifornia.com](http://www.visitcalifornia.com), click on Trade Industry at the bottom, and then click the Commission Meeting Materials Tab.

### **III. Roundtable**

Topic of Partner Buy-Ins was discussed in length.

Should we raising the buy-ins? Should we be pursuing more buy-ins? Partners can require a high volume of work. Dollar amount requested needs to be a fair amount for both partner and the office. We need to possibly make a change that happens in phases but it something that needs to be done on both the trade and PR side. CTTC has determined that internally guidelines and processes regarding partner buy-ins as well as create a standardized sell, with options for partners to ask for more services using an a la carte system. Included in the discussion was whether or not we should pursue new partners at all, having them now can give the perception of being preferential, which is why all offices need to be diligent to give out all opportunities to not just partners. It was determined that until a plan is formed, all solicitations by interested parties wanting to be partners, should be responded to with the message that in light of our new funding, we are revisiting and restructuring the process involved in becoming a partner and what we can do for partners

In conclusion, Claire Bilby offered to the International Offices 5 big things to think about when putting their final plan/presentations together:

- 1) Focus on the big things and do it great

- 2) California comes alive so well in broadcast- think about, while you are looking at promotions, is there a way to use broadcast?
- 3) Process out as to how partners can buy in to these promotions
- 4) Give input on what needs to be done on the website. First look at what the current one isn't doing for you, especially the English speaking countries, before you recommend a whole new website for your country
- 5) Take a look at the new visitors guide and see how that does and doesn't work for you.

Troy takes over as facilitator of the meeting, and meeting moves to discuss the website portal that the international offices will be using to upload/download materials. CTTC would like some input as to how the International offices would like the directory to function, but the site will be where information can be posted (i.e. report briefs, samples, templates, etc.).

The website management at this point is a function of the CTTC Marketing department. The website was built by the agency, Mering/Carson. The website has now been pulled in house. There have been funds allocated in the budget towards the infrastructure and building out of this site.

The business portal is integrated with the data base. The software is called IMIS. CTTC just rolled this out to a select group of assessed businesses- and we are getting pretty good response. 500 updated profiles. 60-70% of the beta group when on line and tried it. Eventually all employees will be using IMS as their data base, currently it's Act! CTTC is working to clean & consolidate and then will be putting that into IMS.

CTTC, requests that the International offices come up with a "wish list" of items they would like to see posted on this web portal, including feedback on cultural differences/nuances or ANYTHING else related to the website.

Meeting officially adjourned at 5:15